

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the following comments.

1. In the abstract

A new abstract of the disclosure is provided that complies with U.S. formalities and is intended to replace the existing abstract of the disclosure.

Acceptance and entry of the new abstract of the disclosure is respectfully requested in the next Office communication.

2. In the drawings

FIGS. 1-6 of the drawings are submitted on the "Replacement Sheets" showing new descriptive textual labels for each of the applicable numbered elements. Since the textual labels permit a viewer to fully understand the drawings without substantial analysis of the detailed description, the amended drawings are considered to comply with the Office's drawing requirements.

Accordingly, entry of the amended FIGS. 1-6 and acknowledgment thereof is kindly requested in the next Office communication.

3. In the claims

The claims are amended as presented in the "Amendment of the Claims." The amendment of the claims are intended to overcome the claims objections, and the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph and 35 U.S.C. § 101.

a. Claim objections

In the amendment of the claims, each of the claims is amended to provide proper antecedent basis for the term "Internet." As a result of this amendment, removal of the claims objections is respectfully requested.

b. Claim rejections

Claims 1-11 and 13-16 are presently rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph for lacking definiteness.

In the amendment of the claims, each recitation of the term "Internet" is properly capitalized. Proper antecedent basis is also provided for the "website" of claim 9, and the "step-top box" of claim 8. Moreover, claim 8 is amended so that it is in the proper Markush style of claiming an alternative limitation.

As a result of this amendment, it is submitted that the pending claims comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Removal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

c. 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claims 1-11 and 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because it is alleged that these claims do not describe an idea that is tied to a technological art.

Claim 1 is presently amended to recite that the method thereof is performed by using a computer that is connected to the Internet. The subsequent steps of this claim are implemented on the computer via the Internet.

As a result of the amendment of claim 1, it is submitted that claim 1 complies with 35 U.S.C. § 101. Since claims 2-11 and 13-16 depend from claim 1, these claims also comply with 35 U.S.C. § 101. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is kindly requested.

4. Rejection of claims 1, 2, 8, 13 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. patent 6,393,423 (Goedken)

Claims 1, 2, 8, 13 and 16 currently stand rejected as being anticipated by the Goedken patent. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection on the basis that the Goedken patent fails to describe or suggest a method for searching information on the Internet, as presently recited in claim 1 of the present application. Claims 2, 8, 13 and 16 thus patentable based on their dependency from claim 1 and their individually recited features.

The Goedken patent generally describes an apparatus and a method for electronic information exchange between and information requestor and one or more information custodians. Unlike the method of claim 1, however, the Goedken patent fails to disclose or suggest a method that employs a human search assistant who assists in a search for information on the Internet. Instead, the Goedken patent describes a method and apparatus wherein an information request is firstly sought outside the Internet on a knowledge database by an automated database manager and not a human search assistant (FIG. 9; col. 19 line 35 through col. 20, line 12).

More specifically, the Goedken patent describes a method including the steps of analyzing an information request of a requestor and then determining an appropriate information custodian for answering the information request. Unlike in claim 1, the apparatus and method of the Goedken patent relies upon the database manager 140 to conduct a search of previously stored information on a knowledge database 136 before a request ever reaches an information custodian (FIG. 9; col. 19, lines 53-57).

The database manager, according to the Goedken patent, is not a human search assistant. Instead, the database manager stores intermediate answer messages from information custodians and conducts a search of the knowledge database 136 to determine whether an answer to an information request already exists. It is only if the database manager does not locate an answer to the information request message that at least a portion of the information request is passed to a selector

and/or a message composer to initiate the preparation of an answer request message (col. 20, lines 1-7).

The database manager of the Goedken patent effectively serves as an automated filter for any information request. According to this patent, it is very possible that a search request may never reach an information custodian. Moreover, the knowledge database from which answers to an information request may be extracted is not a part of the Internet.

Thus, contrary to claim 1 of the pending application, a response to requested information by the apparatus described by the Goedken patent may not be associated with the Internet, but instead may simply be an answer already stored in a knowledge database which does not form a part of the Internet.

In another distinction, the Goedken patent fails to disclose or suggest a search assistant that reformulates an information request. Specifically, the Goedken patent describes passing an information request to a selector and/or a message composer to initiate the preparation of an answer request message to be routed to an information custodian (FIG. 10; col. 20, lines 1-7). Thus, the information request is at least partly modified by the time it reaches the information custodian. Contrariwise, claim 1 of the pending application specifically recites that it is the search assistant himself who reformulates a first information request for entry in a search robot.

As a result of these observations, it is submitted that the Goedken patent fails to disclose or suggest each and every step of a method wherein a human search assistant receives an information request and reformulates the same for searching the Internet with a search robot.

Applicant therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 8, 13 and 16.

5. Rejection of claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent 6,393,423 (Goedken) in view of U.S. patent 6,366,906 (Hoffman)

Claim 4 presently stands rejected as being obvious in view of the combination of the Goedken and Hoffman patents. Claim 4 depends from claim 1 which was distinguished above in view of the Goedken patent.

The Hoffman patent fails to make up for the shortcomings of the Goedken patent. Namely, the Hoffman patent does not disclose or suggest a method wherein a human search assistant receives an information request and reformulates the same for searching on the Internet with a search robot.

Therefore, the Goedken and Hoffman patents, whether considered collectively or individually, do not disclose or suggest the subject matter of claim 4. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

6. Rejection of claim 3, 5-7 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent 6,393,423 (Goedken) in view of U.S. patent 6,377,944 (Busey)

Claims 3, 5-7 and 10 presently stand rejected as being obvious in view of the combination of the Goedken and Busey patents. Claims 3, 5-7 and 10 depend from claim 1 which was distinguished above in view of the Goedken patent.

The Busey patent fails to make up for the shortcomings of the Goedken patent. Namely, the Busey patent does not disclose or suggest a method wherein a human search assistant receives an information request and reformulates the same for searching with a search robot on the Internet.

Therefore, the Goedken and Busey patents, whether considered collectively or individually, do not disclose or suggest the subject matter of claims 3, 5-7 and 10. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

7. Rejection of claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent 6,393,423 (Goedken)

Claim 9 presently stands rejected as being obvious in view of the Goedken patent. Claim 1, which depends from claim 9, was distinguished above in view of the Goedken patent. In view of such distinction, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

8. Rejection of claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent 6,393,423 (Goedken) in view of U.S. patent 6,493,695 (Pickering et al.)

Claim 11 presently stands rejected as being obvious in view of the combination of the Goedken and Pickering et al. patents. Claim 11 depends from claim 1 which was distinguished above in view of the Goedken patent.

The Pickering et al. patent fails to make up for the shortcomings of the Goedken patent. Namely, the Pickering et al. patent does not disclose or suggest a method wherein a human search assistant receives an information request and reformulates the same for searching with a search robot on the Internet.

Therefore, the Goedken and Pickering et al. patents, whether considered collectively or individually, do not disclose or suggest the subject matter of claim 11. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

9. Rejection of claims 14 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent 6,393,423 (Goedken) in view of U.S. patent 6,405,175 (Ng)

Claims 14 and 15 presently stand rejected as being obvious in view of the combination of the Goedken and Ng patents. Claims 14 and 15 depend from claim 1 which was distinguished above in view of the Goedken patent.

The Ng patent fails to make up for the shortcomings of the Goedken patent. Namely, the Ng patent does not disclose or suggest a method wherein a human search assistant receives an information request and reformulates the same for searching with a search robot on the Internet.

Therefore, the Goedken and Ng patents, whether considered collectively or individually, do not disclose or suggest the subject matter of claims 14 and 15. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

10. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that claims 1-11, 13-16 be allowed and the application be passed to issue.

If any issues remain that may be resolved by a telephone or facsimile communication with the Applicant's Attorney, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the numbers shown below.

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Respectfully submitted,



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